

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ARA-06 EUR-08 EA-06 IO-04 ISO-00 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-04 INR-05 LAB-01 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01

SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /081 W

----- 108358

R 241345Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 957

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, LE, XF
SUBJECT: LEBANESE LABOR LEADER RETURNS HOME AS IFPCW PRESIDENT

SUMMARY: LEBANESE LABOR LEADER GEORGE SACRE, NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICAL WORKERS (IFPCW), RETURNED HOME TO BECOME INSTANT CELEBRITY AS FIRST ARAB TO ATTAIN SUCH HIGH-LEVEL POST IN FREE WORLD INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION. ELECTION PROVED EYE-OPENER FOR LEBANESE--AND PRESUMABLY OTHER ARABS--AS WELL AS DRAMATIC VINDICATION OF SORTS FOR SACRE'S CONSISTENT ADVOCACY OF CLOSE ARAB RELATIONS WITH WESTERN TRADE UNIONS. IN COMING MONTHS, SACRE PLANS TO ENCOURAGE OTHER ARAB LABOR LEADERS TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE IN DEVELOPING TIES AND DIALOGUE WITH WEST. MOREOVER, AS ODDS-ON FAVORITE TO ASSUME LEADERSHIP OF LEBANESE LABOR MOVEMENT IN RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE, HE IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED THAN EVER IN INCREASINGLY TURBULENT NATIONAL LABOR SCENE AT HOME. END SUMMARY.

1. GEORGE SACRE, LEBANESE LABOR LEADER WHO WAS ELECTED LAST WEEK BY IFPCW EXECUTIVE BOARD TO SUCCEED LATE LUIS TOVAR AS IFPCW PRESIDENT, RETURNED TO BEIRUT EARLY THIS WEEK TO BECOME INSTANT CELEBRITY BACK HOME. IN UNPRECEDENTED HOMECOMING RECEPTION FOR TRADE-UNIONIST, SACRE WAS GREETED AT AIRPORT BY GOL RED CARPET TREATMENT AND CROWD OF SOME 500 UNION BROTHERS. ON SUCCEEDING DAYS HE HAS BEEN FETED BY COLLEAGUES ON CONFEDERATION OF LEBANESE LABOR (CLL) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (WHO PLAN FURTHER GALA DINNER IN HIS HONOR) AND HAS BEEN FEATURED IN TV AND LOCAL PRESS.

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2. AT OCT 22 PRESS CONFERENCE, SACRE SAID THAT HE WAS ELECTED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE AFTER THREE OTHER POTENTIAL CANDIDATES--AMERICAN, VENEZUELAN AND INDONESIAN--HAD STEPPED BACK BEFORE BALLOTING (COMMENT: SACRE TOLD LABATT PRIVATELY THAT TENTATIVE US CANDIDATE WAS OCAW PRESIDENT A.F. GROSPIRON WHO CHOSE NOT TO RUN IN ORDER TO AVOID GIVING IFPCW, WHICH ALREADY HAS AMCIT GENSEC AND HQS IN US, TOO PRONOUNCED AN AMERICAN IMAGE).

3. SACRE WENT ON TO CALL HIS ELECTION "TRIBUTE TO LEBANESE LABOR MOVEMENT" AND TO PLACE IT IN CONTEXT OF ME, STATING IT REFLECTED IMPORTANCE OF REGION INTERNATIONALLY AS WELL AS IMMENSITY OF ITS OIL RESOURCES.

4. IN DISCUSSING OTHER BUSINESS AT EXEC BOARD MEETING, SACRE STRESSED ATTENTION GIVEN TO ENERGY CRISIS, NOTING THAT NUMEROUS DELEGATES DESCRIBED ITS HARMFUL EFFECTS--IN TERMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION--ON WORKERS IN THEIR COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT HE HAD PRESENTED ARAB CASE DURING DISCUSSIONS, ADDING THAT EXEC BOARD EVENTUALLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION CALLING ON CONCERNED COUNTRIES TO WORK URGENTLY TO RESOLVE THE POLITICAL CAUSES BEHIND ENERGY CRISIS.

5. COMMENTS: CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO SACRE'S NEWBLOWN PRESTIGE LOCALLY IS FRANK INCREDULITY THAT TRADE-UNIONIST FROM ARAB WORLD--AND FROM SMALL, NON-OIL-PRODUCING LEBANON TO BOOT- HAS ATTAINED SUCH A HIGH-LEVEL POST IN IFPCW. TO BE SURE, SACRE HAS SOLID TRADE UNION CREDENTIALS (HEADING POTENT PETROLEUM WORKERS#FEDERATION, HE IS PROBABLY ABLEST AND MOST ARTICULATE LABOR LEADER IN COUNTRY) AND CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN IFPCW AFFAIRS, INCLUDING 8 YRS AS VICE PRES.

6. BUT FOR LEBANESE--AND PRESUMABLY OTHER ARABS--SACRE'S VICTORY IS EYE-OPENER IN ANOTHER REGARD. AS ONE OF FEW ARAB LABOR LEADERS WHO HAS CONSISTENTLY ADVOCATED CLOSE TIES AND DIALOGUE WITH WESTERN TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS (IT MAY BE RECALLED THAT HE CON-

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TRIBUTED TO AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON ME PROBLEMS WITH ISRAELI HISTADRUT REP, PUBLISHED IN MARCH 1974 ISSUE OF AFL-CIO FREE TRADE UNION NEWS), HE HAS OCCASIONALLY BEEN IN LONELY POSITION AGAINST PREVAILING ARAB LABOR SENTIMENT. HENCE, HIS ELECTION REPRESENTS DRAMATIC VINDICATION OF SORTS OF HIS LONGSTANDING EFFORTS TO BUILD BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ARAB AND WESTERN TRADE-UNIONISTS AND SERVES TO ENCOURAGE OTHER ARAB LABOR LEADERS TO RENEW CONTACTS WITH WEST. IN THIS REGARD, SACRE INDICATED TO LABATT THAT HE PLANS IN COMING MONTHS TO INITIATE CONTACTS WITH POTENTIALLY RECEPTIVE UNION LEADERS IN OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES TOWARD THIS GENERAL END AND, SPECIFICALLY, TOWARD AFFILIATION WITH IFPCW.

7. SACRE IS LIKELY TO BE INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN LEBANON AS WELL IN NEAR FUTURE. SINCE DONNING IFPCW HAT, HE HAS BECOME HEAD-AND-SHOULDERS FAVORITE TO BECOME NEXT CLL PRESIDENT. INCUMBENT GABRIEL KHOURY, WHO RECENTLY SUFFERED SECOND HEART ATTACK IS EXPECTED TO STEP DOWN WITHIN YEAR'S TIME (AND HAS ALREADY EFFECTED RECONCILIATION WITH SACRE, HIS ERSTWHILE CHALLENGER/ADVERSARY). IN MEANTIME, SACRE IS LIKELY TO PLAY FRONT-STAGE ROLE IN UPCOMING COST-OF-LIVING CAMPAIGN OF ORGANIZED LABOR WHOSE ALREADY RISING STATUS AS NATIONAL POLITICAL FACTOR HAS BEEN FURTHER BOLSTERED BY REFLECTED GLORY OF SACRE'S PRESTIGE. END COMMENTS

8. FOR DEPARTMENT: EMBASSY WOULD BE PLEASE TO TRANSMIT CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES TO SACRE FROM S/IL AND OTHER OFFICERS WHO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER DETAILS ON IFPCW EXEC BOARD MEETING AND SACRE'S ELECTION THAT DEPT MAY OBTAIN. GODLEY

NOTE BY OCT: #AS RECEIVED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BEIRUT12800
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740304-0706
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741021/aaaaarlo.tel
Line Count: 190
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <23 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE LABOR LEADER RETURNS HOME AS IFPCW PRESIDENT SUMMARY: LEBANESE LABOR LEADER GEORGE SACRE, NEWLY
TAGS: ELAB, LE, XF, IFPCW, (SACRE, GEORGE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005